6 7

8

9

10 11

12

13 14

15

16

17

18

19 20

21

23 24

25

26

27

28

Douglas D. Phelps Phelps & Associates, P.S. 2903 N. Stout Road

Spokane, WA 99206 Phone: (509)892-0467 Fax: (509)921-0802

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

Plaintiff,

VS.

BRENT YORK, a single person,

CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF

OZZIE KNEZOVICH, SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL, SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY RICHEY, OFFICER

TYLER HEIMAN, and JOHN/JANE DOE 1-10,

Defendants.

Case No.

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL** RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983

COMES NOW the Plaintiff, BRENT YORK, by and through his attorney,

DOUGLAS D. PHELPS of PHELPS & ASSOCIATES, P.S., and for a cause of

action against the Defendants above-named alleges as follows:

## I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is a civil action seeking compensatory and punitive damages against the Defendants for police brutality and excessive force, and for committing acts under color of law, depriving the Plaintiff of rights secured by the United States Constitution and the laws of the United States. Defendant Spokane County Deputy Derek J. McNail, while acting in his capacity as an employee of the Spokane County Sheriff's Department, acted to and did in fact deprive

the Plaintiff of his constitutional rights.

- 1.2 Additionally, the acts of the City of Spokane Valley, City of Liberty Lake, Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich, Spokane County Deputy Richey, Officer Tyler Heiman, and John/Jane Doe 1-10 violated the Plaintiff's rights pursuant to the United States Constitution, 42 U.S.C. Section 1983 and 1988, under the Civil Rights Act of 1971 and the common law.
- 1.3 The Plaintiff suffered injury after he was aggressively and without authority of law assaulted by Deputy Spokane County Derek J. McNail and then repeatedly struck in the face with a closed fist while Plaintiff was on the ground and not physically resisting.

## II. JURISDICTION AND PARTIES

2.2 This action is brought pursuant to 42 USC Section 1983 and 1988, under the Civil Rights Act of 1971, alleging that the Defendants acted under the color of law, depriving the Plaintiff of his rights, privileges, and immunities as

guaranteed by the Fourth, Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution.

- 2.3 This Court has jurisdiction of this cause under 28 U.S.C. Sections 1331 and 1343 and 42 U.S.C. Section 1983.
- 2.4 All acts and omissions complained of occurred in the Eastern District of Washington.
- 2.5 Plaintiff Brent York was at all times relevant hereto a resident of Benton County, Washington.
- 2.6 Defendants City of Spokane Valley and City of Liberty Lake is a municipality located in Spokane County, State of Washington.
- 2.7 Defendant Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich is and was the elected Sheriff of Spokane County, State of Washington.
- 2.8 Defendants Spokane County Deputy Derek J. McNail, Spokane County Deputy Richey, Officer Tyler Heiman, and John/Jane Does 1-10, at the time of the incidents alleged in this complaint, was working as a supervisory police officer for the Spokane County Sheriff's Department.
- 2.9 Defendants Spokane County Deputy Derek J. McNail, Spokane County Deputy Richey, Officer Tyler Heiman, and John/Jane Does 1-10, based upon information and belief is believed to be a resident of Spokane County,

Washington, and was are law enforcement officers employed by the Spokane County Sheriff's Department at all times relevant to this action.

- 2.10 All defendants are believed to reside in Spokane County, Washington.
- 2.11 The venue is proper in the Eastern District of Washington under 28 U.S.C. Section 1391 in that the Defendants and Plaintiff resided in, and the cause of action arises in, the Eastern District of Washington.

#### III. FACTUAL HISTORY

- 3.1 On or about October 25, 2019, BRENT YORK was at 18825 E. Arbor Circle in the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY.
- 3.2 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL responded to 18825

  E. Arbor Circle in the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, due to a complaint of a suspicious person.
- 3.3 The same suspicious person who was identified as BRENT YORK, fled from officers on October 24, 2019 at 1525 E. Decatur Ave.
- 3.4 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL and OFFICER
  TYLER HEIMAN surrounded the residence and surrounding street to
  prevent BRENT YORK from fleeing.
- 3.5 All responding officers activated their emergency lights identifying them as law enforcement.

- 3.15 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL used the full weight of his body onto BRENT YORK's hips and lower back and placed his right forearm on the center of his back to keep BRENT YORK from standing and gaining control of his shoulders.
- 3.16 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL ordered BRENT YORK to give up his hands.
- 3.17 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL struck BRENT YORK with two closed fist strikes to his left side rib cage, causing BRENT YORK to trash and move on the ground.
- 3.18 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL struck BRENT YORK again but this time with his right knee to his rib cage.
- 3.19 The strikes SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL gave to BRENT YORK caused significant injury, SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL proceeded to strike BRENT YORK three or more times on the left side of BRENT YORK's face and head with a closed fist.
- 3.20 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY RICHEY and OFFICER TYLER

  HEIMAN, upon arriving moments after SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY

  DEREK J. MCNAIL collided with BRENT YORK, observed SPOKANE

  COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL strike BRENT YORK in the face

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS** 

VIOLATIONS UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983 – Page 7

3.22 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL again placed his full body weight in between BRENT YORK's shoulder blades, pinning him 3.24 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY RICHEY observed that BRENT YORK had blood dripping from his nose, had a swollen left eye, and complaints of 3.25 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY RICHEY and SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL asked BRENT YORK if he would like to 3.27 BRENT YORK was transported to Spokane County Jail by OFFICER 3.28 Spokane County Jail failed to seek medical attention to BRENT YORK for his injuries caused by SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J.

- 3.29 BRENT YORK was injured as a result of SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY

  DEREK J. MCNAIL negligence, violation of his constitutional rights under the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and lack of knowledge, training and supervision relating to basic police procedure, including use of force and restraining a non-violent suspect.
- 3.30 The CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE,

  SPOKANE COUNTY, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE

  KNEZOVICH have failed to provide sufficient training to their police

  officers.
- 3.31 The CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE,

  SPOKANE COUNTY, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE

  KNEZOVICH have engaged in a policy, practice or custom of encouraging and training their police officers to use physical force as a punishment to persons suspected of crimes who flee or otherwise obstruct law enforcement.
- 3.32 The defendants, including those individually named, intended to deprive BRENT YORK of his constitutional rights by their pattern and practice of failing to train and/or training officers to use physical force on non-violent suspects such as BRENT YORK.

3.33	The actions by SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL
	caused severe and excruciating pain to BRENT YORK.

- 3.34 Plaintiff BRENT YORK has suffered, and continues to suffer, from ongoing physical and emotional pain due to the injuries he sustained in this incident where SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL used unnecessary and excessive force.
- 3.35 The CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE,

  SPOKANE COUNTY, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE

  KNEZOVICH have failed to have proper procedures or protections in place
  to adequately document or investigate injuries to arrestees.
- 3.36 The CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE,

  SPOKANE COUNTY, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE

  KNEZOVICH failed to have proper procedures in place to assure that other officers would take steps to protect citizens from assaultive behavior by fellow officers.
- 3.37 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY RICHEY and OFFICER TYLER

  HEIMAN failure to act and/or intercede contributed to the excessive force

  used against BRENT YORK by SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK

  J. MCNAIL.

as paragraphs 4.1 to 4.37.

8 9

3

5

6

4.38 The Defendants caused or failed to prevent injury to BRENT YORK in violation of his rights under 42 USC 1983.

11

12

13

4.39 That the Defendants CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH by custom, policy, or practice caused the injury to BRENT YORK by failing to train or supervise their police officers relating to the proper use of force when

14 15

confronting a citizen who is suspected of violating state law.

17

18

19

16

4.40 As a result of the deprivations and violations to BRENT YORK's rights, he has suffered and continues to suffer injury as a result, including but not

limited to physical, psychological, and emotional injuries.

4.41 BRENT YORK was subjected to unlawful, excessive and unreasonable force

23

by SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL. There was no

24

substantial government interest in using such significant force to effect

BRENT YORK's arrest for misdemeanor violations that are nonviolent and

27 28

minor in nature.

- 4.42 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL used excessive force in his arrest and detention of BRENT YORK in violation of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- 4.43 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL's strikes to and the use of closed fist strikes to the head and face of BRENT YORK was unlawful, unreasonable, excessive and without provocation in violation of BRENT YORK's Fourth Amendment rights.
- 4.44 SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL's strikes to and the use of closed fist strikes to the head and face of BRENT YORK was unlawful, unreasonable, excessive and without provocation and constituted assault and battery upon BRENT YORK.
- 4.45 As a result of the actions or inactions of CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH, Plaintiff BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury, including but not limited to, injuries that are physical, psychological, and emotional.
- 4.46 The Defendants acted with reckless and callous indifference to BRENT YORK's rights and failed to prevent injury to BRENT YORK which was a violation of his rights pursuant to the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

4.47 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH by custom, policy, or practice caused the deprivation of the rights of BRENT YORK by allowing police officers to continually use force beyond that which is necessary to subdue non-violent suspects, and such action is sanctioned by superiors within the Department and the City of Spokane Valley and is the moving force depriving the Plaintiff of his constitutional rights.

That as a result of the violations to BRENT YORK's constitutional rights, he has suffered and continues to suffer injury as a result of his detainment and injuries.

# V. CAUSE OF ACTION FOR NEGLIGENT TRAINING, RETENTION AND SUPERVISION

Plaintiff BRENT YORK re-alleges and incorporates paragraphs 3.1 to 3.37 as paragraphs 5.1 to 5.37.

- 5.38 That SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL failed to make efforts to de-escalate the contact prior to physically assaulting BRENT YORK.
- 5.39 That SPOKANE COUNTY DEREK J. MCNAIL, after BRENT YORK was on the ground, continued to inflict physical and emotional injury by striking BRENT YORK in the face and head with closed fist strikes.

- 5.40 That the acts of SPOKANE COUNTY DEREK J. MCNAIL were done with deliberate and reckless disregard of the injury to the Plaintiff, BRENT YORK.
- 5.41 That the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH by custom, policy, or practice caused the deprivation of the rights of BRENT YORK when they failed to train, supervise and retain SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL relating to use of force on non-violent persons suspected of violating minor misdemeanor laws.
- 5.42 That the actions of SPOKANE COUNTY DEREK J. MCNAIL was outside the scope of necessary and reasonable force that should have been used to detain a citizen on a misdemeanor law violation and caused injury to BRENT YORK.
- 5.43 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH are liable for the actions of their officers when using unnecessary and unreasonable force as they by policy, custom, and practice supported the actions of their officers by failing to implement, attempt or use de-escalation practices when using physical force to subdue non-violent individuals suspected or believed by police to be involved in minor law violations.

That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH and the police officers employed by the CITY OF SPOKAEN VALLEY and CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, including the individually named defendant, engage in a pattern or practice and have failed to act and/or follow and implement a continuum of force policy to prevent the unnecessary escalation of force when dealing with BRENT YORK and other members of the public, which is the moving force depriving BRENT YORK of the aforementioned constitutional rights violations.

5.45 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH and the police officers employed by the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY and CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, including the individually named defendant, engage in a pattern or practice of the use of excessive force on subjects who are already taken into custody, handcuffed or otherwise restrained. These uses of force are unjustified based on the diminished threat posed by the restrained suspects and the force inflicted significant injuries upon the Plaintiff.

5.46 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH and the police officers employed by the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY and CITY OF

LIBERTY LAKE, including the individually named defendants, engage in a pattern or practice of using unnecessary or excessive force in the course of arresting individuals for minor offenses in violation of the constitutional rights of the individuals.

- 5.47 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH and the police officers employed by the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY and CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, including the individually named defendants, engage in a pattern or practice of not properly training their police officers to the police industry standard and by failing to properly train officers, unnecessarily risk injury to the public and persons with whom said officers interact.
- 5.48 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH are liable for violating the constitutional rights of BRENT YORK when, on the City's behalf by custom, policy, or practice encouraged the acts of their employees.
- 5.49 That as a result of the actions or inactions of the Defendants, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury as a result of the excessive use of force used to detain him and injuries, including but not limited to physical, psychological, and emotional.

- 5.50 That the Defendants CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH are liable for the actions of their employees where they encouraged the acts by custom, policy, or practice which resulted in the causation of and failure to prevent injury to BRENT YORK.
- 5.51 That Defendants CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH, are liable for the actions of their employees for failing to train said employees in procedures involving the use of closed fist strikes, police searches, interactions with citizens, and training to prevent the use of excessive force which resulted in the injury to BRENT YORK.
- 5.52 That as a result of the actions or inactions of the employees of CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH, Plaintiff BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.
- 5.53 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH failed to adequately and fully train law enforcement officers on when to use intermediate levels of force, resulting in the injury of BRENT YORK.

- That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH intentionally, willfully, recklessly and/or negligently created no training programs for police officers employed by the CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY and CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and in so doing created a situation where police officers were patrolling the streets, responding to criminal acts and interacting with citizens when the police officers had inadequate, little or no training in how to properly deal with the situations they were confronting.
- 5.55 That as a result of the negligent training, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.
- 5.56 That Defendants CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH are liable for the actions of their employees for failing to supervise said employees in procedures involving use of force, arrest procedures, police searches and interactions with citizens, which resulted in the injury to BRENT YORK.
- 5.57 That as a result of the actions or inactions of the employees of CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.

- 5.58 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH failed to adequately and fully supervise law enforcement officers, resulting in the injury of BRENT YORK.
- 5.59 That as a result of the negligent supervision, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.
- LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH are liable for the actions of their employees for failing to discharge BRENT YORK, who was not properly trained as a police officer, was known to have been involved in improper action or criminal activity against citizens (both suspected of crimes and improperly and unlawfully suspected of crimes), which resulted in the injury to BRENT YORK.
- 5.61 That CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY, CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE KNEZOVICH encouraged such actions by custom, policy, and practice of not removing officers who were unnecessarily violent and/or improperly trained, such as SPOKANE COUNTY DEPUTY DEREK J. MCNAIL.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
28	

- 5.62 That as a result of the actions or inactions of CITY OF SPOKANE VALLEY,
  CITY OF LIBERTY LAKE, and SPOKANE COUNTY SHERIFF OZZIE
  KNEZOVICH, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.
- 5.63 That as a result of the negligent retention, BRENT YORK suffered and continues to suffer injury.
- 5.64 Plaintiff demands a jury on all issues so triable.

#### VI. RELIEF SOUGHT

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiff prays for judgment against the Defendants, jointly and severally, in an amount that will fairly compensate the Plaintiff for all damages sustained, costs, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, interest calculated at the maximum amount allowable by the law, and any other relief the Court deems just, including but not limited to:

- a. Past and future medical expenses.
- b. Past and future emotional and psychological counseling costs.
- c. Past and future loss of earnings.
- d. Permanent and partial impairment of earnings and earning capacity.
- e. Pain and suffering.
- f. Past and future permanent and partial disability.
- g. Loss of enjoyment of life.
- h. Past and future special damages.
- i. Interest calculated at the maximum amount allowable by law, including prejudgment interest.
- j. Injunctive relief to prevent future actions to protect others similarly situated.
- k. Injunctive relief including but not limited to training or retraining officers of the City of Spokane Valley Police Department and City of Liberty Lake Police Department
- 1. Punitive damages.

- m. Actual or compensatory damages.
- n. Nominal damages.

6

B

10

12

13

14

15

16

17

19

21

22

24

25

26

27

28

- o. Attorneys' fees and cost.
- p. Cost and disbursements herein in an amount to be proven at the time of trial.
- q. Such other relief as the Court believes is equitable and just.

DATED this day of October, 2021.

PHELPS & ASSOCIATES, P.S.

Attorneys for Plaintiff

DOUGLAS D. PHELPS, ISBA # 4755

2903 N. Stout Road Spokane, WA 99206

Tel: (509) 892-0467, Fx: (509) 921-0802

phelps@phelpslaw1.com

COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

VIOLATIONS UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983 – Page 20

- 1	
1	STATE OF WASHINGTON )
2	: ss
3	County of Spokane )
4	
5	BRENT YORK, being first duly sworn on oath, deposes and states:
6	
7	I am the named Plaintiff herein, I have read the foregoing Complaint for Damages;
8	know the contents thereof, and I believe the same to be true and correct.
9	
10	
11	21111
12	Scert U/
13	BRENT YORK
14	
15	
16	September
17	SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 13 day of April, 2021.
18	
19	
20	ATILISM
21	January V
22	NOTARY PUBLIC for the State of Washington
23	Residing at Spokane WA
24	My Commission expires:
25	AMANDA SMITH
26	NOTARY PUBLIC #208165 STATE OF WASHINGTON
27	JUNE 19, 2023

I